

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

EB-11 RSR-01 /114 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8206

INFO GOV PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 4234

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJ: PRESS ARTICLE RE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

REFS: (A) PANAMA USIS MEDIA REACTION OF AUG. 9

(B) PANAMA 3689

(C) PANAMA 4120

SUMMARY: ARTICLES PLACING RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELAY
IN RESUMPTION CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS ON U S
APPEARED IN PANAMA CITY NEWSPAPERS AUGUST 9. STORIES
CLEARLY REVEAL FOREIGN MINISTRY INPUT AND APPEAR TO
BE ATTEMPT TO SHOW GOP IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE BUT
WILL FIRMLY DEFEND PANAMA'S BASIC
POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA AND
ITS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SISTER STAR AND HERALD AUGUST 9
CARRIED FEATURE ARTICLES CONCERNING CANAL TREATY
NEGOTIATIONS UNDER HEADLINE "NEXT MOVE ON TREATY UP TO
U S", FULL TEXTS OF WHICH ARE BEING REPORTED IN USIS
MEDIA REACTION (REFTEL A). ARTICLES ARE ATTRIBUTED TO
SOURCE "CLOSE TO FOREIGN MINISTRY".

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2. SOURCE IS QUOTED AS SAYING US HAS SHOW NO SIGNS OF

WANTING TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS DESPITE FACT SIX MONTHS AGO, BEFORE UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, US MADE "URGENT" REQUEST FOR RESUMPTION OF TALKS. PANAMA, IN AGREEING TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS, HAD "FIXED TWO ELEMENTS AND WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR THEM TO ACT." THE "ELEMENTS" WHICH US WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT WERE (A) "THE NEED FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES TO REACH ACCORD ON BASIC PRINCIPLES BEFORE DISCUSSING DETAILS," AND (B) "THAT NEW ROUND OF TALKS WOULD BE HELD IN PANAMA."

3. ARTICLE MENTIONS TWO OF EIGHT BASIC PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN TACK'S LETTER OT SECRETARY ROGERS OF MAY 21 UPON WHICH AGREEMENT WOULD BE NECESSARY. THESE TWO WRE:

" - FULL PANAMANIAN JURISDICTION OVER CANAL ZONE...

" - A FIXED TERM FOR THE NEW TREATY WHICH IN NO CASE WOULD EXTEND BEYOND TURN OF CENTURY."

4. SOURCE REPORTEDLY ALSO SAID THAT SINCE GOP HAD SET FORTH BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR NEGOTIATIONS, THERE HAD BEEN "APPARENT AGREEMENT" BUT THIS HAD NOT BEEN SPELLED OUT SUFFICIENTLY.

COMMENT. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND INITIATIVE FOR ARTICLE AND INTERVIEW CAME FROM AUTHOR OF ARTICLE, IT DOES GIVE INDICATION OF NEGOTIATING POSITION FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEKS TO CONVEY TO PANAMANIAN PUBLIC: (1) GOP IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE, BUT WILL NOT SACRIFICE BASIC PRINCIPLES, I.E., IT IS UPHOLDING "LA DIGNIDAD NACIONAL", AND (2) REASON FOR LACK OF RECENT ACTIVITY IN NEGOTIATION IS U S DELAY IN REPLYING TO TACK'S LETTERS TO AMBASSADOR ANDERSON AND SECRETARY ROGERS. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH LINE TAKEN IN PRESS ARTICLES JULY 10 AND JULY 28 (REF B AND REF C). GOP MAY BE SETTING STAGE FOR CLAIMS OF SUCCESS FOR ITS POLICY WHEN NEGOTIATIONS ARE RESUMED.
THOMPSON

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